

## ANNEX V Predeployment, Redeployment and Reunion Concept Briefings TO JRTC & Fort Polk CHAPEL STANDING OPERATING PROCEDURES

The following are ideas and concepts to be used with Soldiers and Family members in support of Family Readiness Groups for Units and individuals that are deployed. This work is all based on the work of Ch (COL) William DeLeo (Ret.). The same briefings that are used in theater for the deployed service members needs to be the same for the families that are at the home station.

This "Family Redeployment Readiness Plan" is one part of "Operation READY." Each element of "Operation READY" is designed as part of a failsafe program to ensure that individuals and families rebound from a separation which could have short or long term negative impact upon their relationships. Each element can stand alone. The cumulative affect of the total program is the continued strengthening of families. Individuals and families will not only *endure* the challenges of military living, but will also grow ever stronger by those experiences.

The key factor in personal or family successful reunion and readjustment experiences is readiness. Not being prepared to reconnect to a social group of any sort may indicate that persons reconnect in unhealthy ways. Unhealthy readjustments may be the forerunner to divorce and emotional mal-adjustment. All of these Orientation Programs attempt to acquaint and ready persons to ensure that their adjustment is as trouble free as possible.

The program has several elements. The first has to do with ensuring that commanders, staff, and helping agencies, including volunteers, understand the intention of this program. First, we prepare those who will be presenting the program to understand the impact of separation and how we can ready individuals and families for the adjustment which will be needed.

The second portion presents lesson plans which will ready various parts of our target audience. These lessons are easy to present and when effectively given will ready the participants to make the transition to home and garrison living. At the same time, the lesson plans are guides which give basic experiential learning times. They may be amplified and strengthened by the individual knowledge, training, and experience of the presenter.

The final portion includes reunion materials which provide a seminar for couples and families who will attend them and a "Family Redeployment Reunion Home Study Guide" for those who cannot or do not attend a reunion seminar.

Also included in the manual is the "Personal Redeployment Readiness Guide" which was given to members of your unit as they redeployed. It is only intended to serve as a "stop gap" method for personal redeployment readiness if a person cannot or does not attend a Personal Redeployment Readiness Orientation. Today I will brief you on the program outline and implementation of the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment Army Family Redeployment Readiness Program. Following my presentation, I will also describe for you the make up of our local team and how we will present the program. Personal and Family Redeployment Readiness is about being ready to encounter the changes that have taken place over the months of a deployment or separation. It's

about understanding what the separation does to people and to families. It's about knowing what things are different. It's about learning how to "go slow" through the process of reunion. It's about READINESS!

What we have learned from past deployments and redeployments tells us how to prepare for this reunion.

- We know that almost one-half of all children become ill from the stresses of reunion.
- About one-third of wives note problems with their own anger and resentment over not being able to fulfill personal needs when their husbands return.
- Nearly one-third of wives report they are not included in any more family decision making.
- Nearly one-third of wives report they are not happy with their husband's intolerance of their children.
- Twenty-nine percent of wives, in one study, reported that their children became behavior and discipline problems AFTER their husbands returned home.
- We know that about 30% of wives say that deployments harm their marriages.
- We know that parenting rules shift during and again after deployments to adjust for the one parent, new guardian, and the return to normalcy.
- We know that everyone wants things to be "normal," however their definitions of normal are not the same. Some want the "new normal" while others want what they remember things used to be like.
- We know that all adjustments are stressful, as are all separations.

The readjustment process is a transitional period in a military member's personal and/or family life. Studies demonstrate that healthy families are not harmed by the separation. This does not negate the need for a readjustment and transitional period, however.

Troubled families are not helped. Though we may believe that separation is good for troubled families, it does not resolve their differences or solve their problems. The separation, may in fact, be more peaceful. But the calm of the separation may lead some to believe that things will be resolved when the family or couple is reunited. This is ordinarily far from the truth.

We know from family member feedback that when the military community resolves to provide self-sufficiency and self-sustainment training for families, that families respond positively. Family support programs ease deployment, transition, and reunion stresses. The availability and accessibility of support staff and support programs are essential in easing the transition to normalcy.

With chaplains at the lead, a reunion orientation team has been created. No longer can we with scarce resources have the luxury of one agency providing the total support for any one project. The Personal and Family Redeployment Readiness Plan calls for the formation of a team of professionals to ensure that appropriate readiness is accomplished. Our team will consist of the chaplains, the Army Community Services, the Red Cross, Family Assistance Center leaders and support staff, Family Support Group leaders and other volunteers, medical services personnel and social work services personnel. This team will ensure that unless someone is resisting or avoiding

reunion readiness, we will have significantly reduced the bumpy road that awaits redeploying soldiers and their families.

It is easier to ask “Who is NOT our target audience?” Everyone in this room who faces a separation is a part of those who will face readjustment - - prepared or not. Although everyone is vulnerable, in our community we are targeting

**SPECIAL NOTE: NAME THE UNITS AND FAMILY READINESS GROUPS WHO WILL BE THE FOCUS OF YOUR COMMUNITY’S ATTENTION. IF YOU HAVE RESERVISTS REDEPLOYING OR RETURNING TO CONUS FROM YOUR COMMUNITY, DESCRIBE HOW YOU WILL TARGET THEM AND THEIR FAMILIES.**

Our plan has two basic parts. The first is to ensure that readjustment readiness orientations are provided to all personnel. During the redeployment phase, Task Force Dragoon and Operation Iraqi Freedom will provide every member Personal Redeployment Readiness Orientations. Those who cannot attend orientation training will be provided a Personal Redeployment Readiness Guide which provides them an overview with practical exercises of the orientation information.

Following redeployment a Reunion Seminar will be provided families and couples in our community. There will be both unit specific and community in general seminars. Part of the process of the seminar will be to identify those who may be in need of special assistance with the reunion and readjustment process.

The important elements of personal redeployment readiness orientations include the following subjects noted on this slide.

Physical changes. These changes include a daily schedule. It will be more difficult at home to stay up half the night. Or, it will be more difficult at home to turn in at 2000! Then there’s the food only “mama” can make. But mix that with the rations of the mission and there are bound to be some physical responses! Often there is a rush to eat all the favorite foods in the first 24 hours. That can be disastrous on a person’s digestive system.

Of course, the adjustment to living in a deployed military environment to the confines of home life will shock a person. Both the family and the military member will find that home life is more restrictive of personal habits than is the field environment.

Relationship concerns are obvious. Living with a personal family is not like living with your military buddies. Relationships are demanding and the military member may find family life more restrictive than he or she remembers. Plus the demands of parenting are monumental.

Then, there are the social adjustments. Some personal habits can develop in a year that are not acceptable public behavior at home and in garrison. Vulgarity and profanity may be among them.

The major emphasis in the personal redeployment readiness plan is marriage and family. These relationships are the most vulnerable. During the

separation many new ideas, habits, trends, attitudes, and behaviors have developed. Adjusting to them is a monumental task.

And then, there are the kids. Kids are especially vulnerable. Their emotional response to the absence of one parent ranges from anger to having totally forgotten the parent, depending on age. Toddlers must shift their loyalties to ensure their own emotional health. To shift back after a long separation plays havoc with their emotional stability. This is an especially difficult transition for single parents who have given custody of their children to grandparents, god-parents, or friends.

Families also must make adjustments. Waiting wives and husbands both believe that their adjustment is the most difficult. Sometimes, grandparents who have just spent the year watching their little granddaughter grow from a three to a four year old or watched their grandson grow from a four year old to a pre-schooler have as difficult time with the loneliness as do the parents or single parent with the adjustment to home living.

These are not easy times. In the Family Redeployment Readiness Orientations families are readied to adjust to the new living arrangements. They learn what to expect from their returning family member. They hear about how to make adjustments to the new rules or return to the old ones. They learn how to negotiate the family rules. They will participate in exercises which assist them in modifying the rules to accommodate one another.

They will learn "how slow is slow." Rushing to having things the way they were is a road filled with disastrous results.

They will learn how to start their marriage again. They will learn principles which make for solid marriages. They will be encouraged to make this a fresh start for their marriage whether they ever had a marital problem or not.

There will be special sessions with young children and teenagers. These folks have a hard time sitting through adult programs. Although not intended to be conducted at the same time, they can be.

Overall, the orientations are expected to cover nearly every area of difficulty a couple or family may encounter. But of even greater value, it is an opportunity to watch for the most vulnerable families to provide special attention to their needs.

We celebrate the reality that Army families are self-sufficient and self-sustaining and these programs are designed to enhance those characteristics.

Following the readiness orientations will come the Reunion Seminars which are most effective when they take place between 21 and 60 days. Do them too soon and they are like "Pre-marital Counseling," nobody's paying attention. Do them too late and they are like taking golf lessons after playing for a while; it's hard to correct the learned mistakes and doing it correctly doesn't feel right.

In the seminars, couples and families learn the principles of rebonding and rebuilding their relationships. They will hear one another tell stories of the demonstration of their

individual and family strengths. They will be introduced to how to create a plan for building on those strengths and enriching those that are weak. They will be provided with experiences which will give their family a strong start to regaining that quality which makes them great. Finally, they will have the opportunity to make a commitment to do those things which will continue them down the road to family wellness.

Finally, the Family Redeployment Readiness Plan includes everything needed to conduct an effective family reunion program. The Coordinator's Manual includes a Program Overview, this Commander's Briefing, complete Instructions and Lesson Plans, the Personal Redeployment Readiness Guide, Personal Redeployment Readiness Orientations, the Rebonding and Rebuilding Reunion Seminar, and the Family Redeployment Reunion Home Study Guide.

Pending your questions, this concludes the briefing on the Family Redeployment Readiness Plan.

[Appendix 1 Soldier's Family Support Group Risk Assessment & Information](#)

[Appendix 2 Chaplain Family Support Briefing](#)

[Appendix 3 Reunion Briefing Service Members and Family Members while Separate](#)

[Appendix 4 Reunion Briefing during the First Week Reverse Processing](#)

[Appendix 5 Family Separation Issues and Ideas](#)